

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A communications system, having a prepaid architecture for managing a plurality of prepaid wireless accounts for communication services, wherein each prepaid account is associated with a prepaid subscriber, comprising:
 - a wireless network including a mobile switch, in communication with a wireless device, the wireless device for remotely managing at least one of the prepaid accounts;
 - a wide area network including:
 - a prepaid account database for storing records assigned to subscribers of prepaid communications services;
 - a prepaid application module for initializing and updating the prepaid accounts;
 - a credit card transaction server, coupled to a credit card database, for checking available credit; and
 - a prepaid server coupled to the prepaid account database and the prepaid application module; and
 - a gateway in communication with the mobile switch of the wireless network and in communication with the wide area network.
2. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
 - a web appliance, in communication with the wide area network, for remotely managing at least one of the prepaid accounts.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the wireless device is WAP-enabled and wherein the mobile switch is WAP-enabled and wherein the gateway is WAP-enabled.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the wireless device is selected from the group consisting of a cellular telephone, a personal digital assistant and a pager.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein the gateway is selected from the group consisting of a push proxy and a WAP push proxy.

6. A method for initializing a prepaid wireless account for communication services, wherein the prepaid account is associated with a prepaid subscriber, the method comprising:

providing wireless access to a network for managing the prepaid account;

coupling a wireless device to the network;

collecting credit card account information from the prepaid subscriber through the network;

establishing the prepaid account on a subscriber account database;

receiving a prepaid amount from the prepaid subscriber; and

checking the credit card account for available credit based on the prepaid amount.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

coupling a web appliance to the network for managing the prepaid account.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the wireless device is WAP-enabled.

9. A method for replenishing a prepaid wireless account, wherein the prepaid account is associated with a prepaid subscriber, and wherein the account includes credit card account information associated with a subscriber requesting replenishment, the method comprising:

providing wireless access to a network for managing the prepaid account;

coupling a wireless device to the network; and

charging a pre-authorized amount to the credit card account.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

coupling a web appliance to the network for managing the prepaid account.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the wireless device is WAP-enabled.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

pushing an alert to the wireless device when a subscriber account balance falls below a recharge threshold amount.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

pushing an alert to the wireless device at a predetermined frequency.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein pushing an alert to the wireless device includes pushing the alert during a communications session.
15. A method for retrieving an account balance for a prepaid wireless account, wherein the prepaid account is associated with a prepaid subscriber, and wherein the account balance is stored in a customer account database, the method comprising:
 - providing wireless access to a network for managing the prepaid account;
 - coupling a wireless device to the network; and
 - querying the customer account database.
16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
 - coupling a web appliance to the network for managing the prepaid account.
17. The method of claim 16, wherein the wireless device is WAP-enabled.
18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:
 - pushing an alert to the wireless device when a subscriber account balance falls below a recharge threshold amount.
19. The method of claim 18, further comprising:
 - pushing an alert to the wireless device at a pre-determined frequency.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein pushing an alert to the wireless device includes pushing the alert during a communications session.

21. A system for initializing a prepaid wireless account for communication services, wherein the prepaid account is associated with a prepaid subscriber, the system comprising:
means for providing wireless access to a network for managing the prepaid account;
means for coupling a wireless device to the network;
means for collecting credit card account information from the prepaid subscriber through the network;
means for establishing the prepaid account on a subscriber account database;
means for receiving a prepaid amount from the prepaid subscriber; and
means for checking the credit card account for available credit based on the prepaid amount.

22. The system of claim 21, further comprising:
means for coupling a web appliance to the network for managing the prepaid account.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the wireless device is WAP-enabled.

24. A system for replenishing a prepaid wireless account, wherein the prepaid account is associated with a prepaid subscriber, and wherein the account includes credit card

account information associated with a subscriber requesting replenishment, the system comprising:

means for providing wireless access to a network for managing the prepaid account;

means for coupling a wireless device to the network; and

means for charging a pre-authorized amount to the credit card account.

25. The system of claim 24, further comprising:

means for coupling a web appliance to the network for managing the prepaid account.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the wireless device is WAP-enabled.

27. The system of claim 26, further comprising:

means for pushing an alert to the wireless device when a subscriber account balance falls below a recharge threshold amount.

28. The system of claim 27, further comprising:

means for pushing an alert to the wireless device at a predetermined frequency.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein pushing an alert to the wireless device includes means for pushing the alert during a communications session.

30. A system for retrieving an account balance for a prepaid wireless account, wherein the prepaid account is associated with a prepaid subscriber, and wherein the account balance is stored in a customer account database, the steps comprising:

means for providing wireless access to a network for managing the prepaid account;

means for coupling a wireless device to the network; and

means for querying the customer account database.

31. The system of claim 30, further comprising:

means for providing a web appliance for accessing the network; and

means for coupling a web appliance to the network for managing the prepaid account.

32. The system of claim 31, wherein the wireless device is WAP-enabled.

33. The system of claim 32, further comprising:

means for pushing an alert to the wireless device when a subscriber account balance falls below a recharge threshold amount.

34. The system of claim 33, further comprising:

means for pushing an alert to the wireless device at a predetermined frequency.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein pushing an alert to the wireless device includes means for pushing the alert during a communications session.

36 A computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform the steps of:
collecting credit card account information from a prepaid subscriber, wherein the prepaid account is associated with a prepaid subscriber;
establishing the prepaid account on a subscriber account database;
receiving a prepaid amount from the prepaid subscriber;
checking the credit card account for available credit based on the prepaid amount;
and
pushing an alert to the wireless device when a subscriber account balance falls below a recharge threshold amount.

37. The medium of claim 36, having instructions stored thereon that cause the processor to perform the further step of:
pushing an alert to the wireless device at a predetermined frequency.

38. The medium of claim 37, having instructions stored thereon that cause the processor to perform the further step of:
pushing the alert during a communications session.